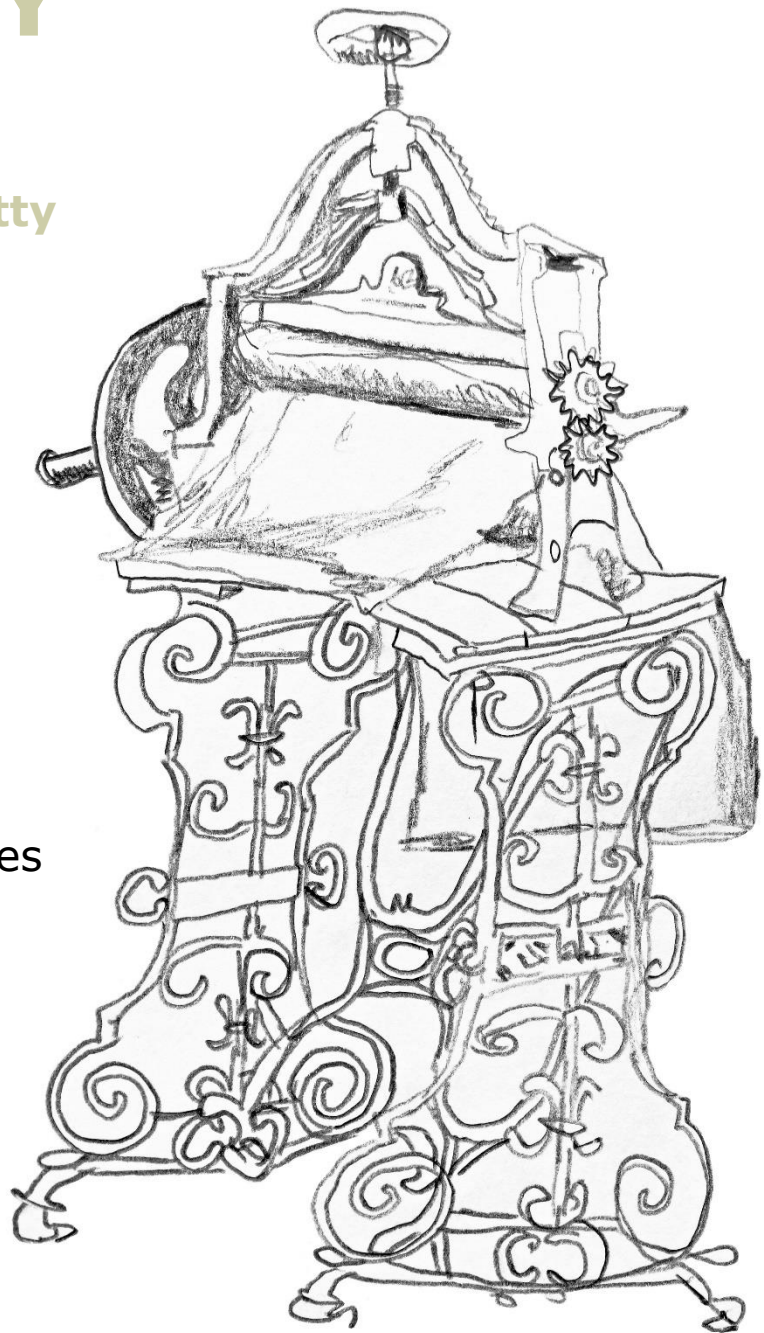


ART OF THE INTANGIBLE HISTORY

Maiju Matilda Löytty

Negotiating
the possibilities of
arts-based research
for learning processes
in Finnish-Namibian
Museums



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Finnish-Namibian Museums

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ABSTRACT

This thesis is a qualitative, arts-based research which examines learning processes about case-study museums about Finnish – Namibia cultural history. It elaborates the shared history, meaning the missionary work done by Finland in Namibia since in 1870 and certain post-colonial theories related to this history. It discusses museums as knowledge-shaping arenas and self-directed learning environments.

The thesis explores the possibilities which contemporary artistic practices bring forth for discussing cultural history, post-colonial theories and museums as learning environments. It analyses what kind of visual images, meanings and social and cultural contexts are embedded in the setting. Practices of looking, certain subject positions, and power relations regarding cultures and cultural contexts are examined.

The research discusses theories of knowledge and how an artist/researcher learns through encountering the complex systems of a cultural history museums through art-making. The case-studies, relevant literature and contemporary art processes during the research process contribute to a discussion around the concept of history and the fluid and rhizomatic nature of knowledge. The

negotiations derive from a poststructuralist world view and uses concepts and terminology from philosophers and social theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. An emphasis is made on embodied, affectual learning and it challenges the notion of being able to know the whole truth about the subject of research. The research finds fixed knowledge problematic in relation to museums, colonial discourses and concepts such as stereotype.

The thesis touches upon the multiple subject position in history narration and investigates alternative views through shared discussions with Namibian historians and museums visitors. It elaborates the cultural imperialistic influence which Finland has had over Namibia, but also problematizes hindsight and a single or binary perception of the setting. It realizes the ambiguous nature of identity and issues of representation. As an alternative it proposes a knowledge based on movement and experiments with abstraction. The thesis points out how remaining neutral or objective in art, history or museum constructing is nearly impossible and manipulation happens on multiple levels. It argues that majority of history and experience can never be shared. Although the research tangents with institutional critique, the purpose is not to dismiss the museum but to turn towards new potential

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an entangled, rhizomatic manifestation of an entangled rhizomatic topic. The aim of this research is not to adapt a role of an explorer, conqueror of an unknown territory or country, make findings as a pioneer and show light to Truth. However, the purpose can be described as an investigation and analysis of subjective learning processes, certain cultural historic developments and as a realization of ambiguity. The artistic project that goes hand in hand and is verbalized in the discussion chapter and the verbalizing processes act as attempts to categorize and clarify certain contexts and propose new thoughts.

1.1 KEY THEMES AND CONCEPTS

It is important to start by explaining that one of the core themes of the research is the issue of knowledge itself. The research engages with epistemological discourses and questions how knowledge can be obtained, shared and

interpreted and how it changes and grows all the time. The motif is to know whether arts-based inquiry can contribute to learning and creating knowledge about museums, history and culture in relation to post-colonialism and more-over, what possibilities does it bring forth. The nature of artistic knowledge, in an epistemological sense relying on art as an object, is problematized, but the potentials of art as an event or encounter are explored. (jagodzinski, 2013, p. 193-194)

What then could be the reason for an ambiguous arts-based research about museums representing the history of Finnish people in Namibia? First reason is a sense of appreciation towards these small museums and their workers, who battle with existence and are faced with many struggles regarding finances and the role of museums in the society. Second reason involves a genuine interest in the unique and complex history of Finnish people in Namibia and characteristics that make the countries relationship specific. This also includes a curiosity about the role of Finland in the colonial era and its noticeable imperial influence on the Namibian culture. Third reason evolves from my growing interest in museums and a comprehension of them as knowledge-shaping arenas, which cannot stand the claim of objectivity and neutrality. Fourthly, leading to this research is the realization of a poststructuralist worldview, social theories and theories of knowledge from

philosophers such as Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Pondering on what knowledge is founded on, the role of experience and on the other hand, the possibilities that art offers for challenging conventions have influenced the formation of this research.

When dealing with a visual culture research, the issue of showing and (re)presenting findings is one of the first entry points. What has led to this research is finding the concepts of subject-position and representation increasingly problematic, and the aim is thus to negotiate, not only representations, but also non-representational theory and the fragmented and ever-changing nature of culture, history and subjectivity. The approach is to use processes of art-making to discuss the research question, to learn about museums as constructed representations, while reflecting on subjective learning processes. There is an attempt to make connections and categorize different contexts, as will be elaborated through the art and discussions, but also a wish to work with the impossibility of the task and always challenge the notion of representation.

An autoethnographic approach to this research includes an analysis of the singular¹ experience of the reality; the interwoven and entangled mess of thoughts, encounters with others and art as a practice. There is a wish to share subjective experience through words, albeit incomplete, and learn about learning, museums, visual culture, Finland, Namibia, post-colonialism, knowledge and cross-cultural relations. This also includes a process of learning about and coming to terms with the impossibility of grasping the whole intangible setting.

1.2 OVERVIEW

This thesis begins with addressing the research questions and explaining why the chosen methodology is the most fitting for the case². An important argument about the meaning of art in the research³ context follows an introduction into reasons for using case studies. Ethics are discussed briefly⁴ and leading into the discussion about theoretical foundations⁵, the reader is informed of the three layers constructing the research arena, meaning 1. Culture, History and the Post-colonial, 2. The Construction of a Museum and 3. Experience of the Artist/Researcher. A negotiation around theories of

¹¹ The concept of singularity is further discussed in chapter 4. d. Theories of Knowledge.

² Chapter 3. a. Research questions

³ Chapter 3. b. Arts based research

⁴ Chapter 3. d. A word about ethics

⁵ Chapter 4. Theoretical Foundations

knowledge and their influence on all the layers, is included. The data and discussion⁶ section applies the theoretical foundations in the analysis of artistic processes, as well as the artist/researcher's experience of the museums. Eventually this leads to the concluding chapter,⁷ a summary of the negotiations around the possibilities of arts-based research for learning processes in the museums.

1.3 MOTIVATION AND THE RESEARCHER'S RELATION TO THE TOPIC

Before discussing the case studies at hand, a question comes forth about my relation as a researcher to the setting and why I have decided to research this topic? As is elaborated in the following chapter about the methodology, my participatory role in the research cannot be abandoned (Kallio, 2013, p. 68). Part of the methodology is to use myself as an autoethnographic instrument for data collection. Since the knowledge created is based on a singular experience and cannot be applied to anyone else seamlessly, being open and honest about my subjective experience is hence important and reasoned by the interest in learning processes. The reflection on singular, subjective experience can however lead to new knowledge about learning, which can be applicable to new contexts and lead to new innovations. It is important to

⁶ Chapter 5. Data and Discussion

⁷ Chapter 7. Conclusion

keep in mind, when talking about the subjective, that the subject is also fragmented, ambivalent, rhizomatic and ever changing. Keeping this in mind, it is anyway crucial to lay out some basic realities about myself.

As is the case with many researchers, my interest for the topic arises from personal history. My family has lived and worked in Namibia in three generations, starting from my father's parents who arrived as missionaries in Ovamboland⁸ in 1956. My father was born in the North of Namibia in Onandjokwe hospital in 1959, which is the location of one of the museums subject to this investigation. In 1998 when I was still a child, my family left to the same destination to reside in the hospital area Onandjokwe, to work as missionaries in the Northern Namibia. Through the following nine years' time I lived in Namibia, some years in the North, but most of the time in Windhoek, the capital of Namibia.

After reaching adulthood and completing matric in Windhoek International School I proceeded to University studies in Finland. Higher lever Visual Art studies during International Baccalaureate's final years, further lead me to choose a contemporary art programme in university. Graduating with a

⁸ The term "Ovamboland" and certain problematics around it are elaborated in chapter 4. a: Culture, History and the Post-colonial.

bachelor's degree in Visual Art later set me in the path towards a master's degree programme in Nordic Visual Studies and Art Education (NoVA). Throughout my studies the interest toward inter- and cross-cultural issues remained strong and intersections between art, history and society drew my attention. Moving back to Finland in the age of 18, after living in an African country for years and trying to figure out my place in the world pushed me towards deep pondering about ethical issues and my personal relation with post-colonial discourse.

My bachelor theses researched different styles of expressions of fear through painting, among the Namibian and Finnish youth, however throughout my academic years, I was always troubled by the oversimplified, traditional binaries (self/other, man/woman/, colonizer/ colonized⁹) of the European / African relations. How could I explain the complexity, uniqueness and ambivalence of the history or even my experience of Finland and Namibia, without falling into the trap of practicing my white privileged position and repeating cultural imperialistic practices? I have long abandoned the idea of myself as a spokesperson for Namibians, even if I have close relation and good intentions towards the country and its people. I will not

⁹ See Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather; Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, 1995

take the position of representing Finland either, as I don't believe anyone can, but having said this, what comes to my stand regarding this research I anyhow place myself in the continuum of the Finnish people living in Namibia and more precisely, the line of missionaries. I have not worked as a missionary myself, but I have lived as a so called "MK", Missionary kid¹⁰ and as is discussed later in this thesis, I have often been perceived through the history of my parents and grandparents, both in Finland and Namibia. This topic is personal for me, it cannot be denied, and this might raise the question of my capability to speak objectively about it. To this I will reply, referring to my chosen methodology and theories of knowledge, objectivity is almost unreachable. More-over, I have an honest attempt for self-criticality and one could claim that criticality towards self is always most brutal.

¹⁰ To read more about concept and term "Mission Kid" as well as "Third Culture Kid", see Bell-Villada, G. H., Sichel, N., Eidse, F. & Orr, E. N. (ed.) 2011. Writing out of limbo: International childhoods, global nomads and third culture kids. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. And Marttinen, A.-C. 1992. Matkalaukkulapset. Kirjaneliö. Suomen Lähetysseura publication.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions of this study ascended as a result of the personal and academic motivation and interest in the earlier mentioned themes. The questions also derive from my will to learn more about history, as well as about the human efforts to understand it. In addition, I have an appreciation, and on the other hand a critical view on museums and interest on why it might be especially important to visit them.¹¹ The realization and consequent frustration of oversimplifications apparent in cultural and even post-colonial debates has been a motif to research Finnish – Namibian relations from yet another new angle. Last, but not least, leading to this research is the curiosity whether something like art, could offer a tool for creating knowledge (and challenge notions) that is not dependable on rigid structures, clichés or

¹¹ I almost feel the urge to state: the will to find out if museums can be enjoyed more.

stereotypical representations, linearity and power. The interest in art as a process of learning involves a genuine questioning, whether it is possible to harness art for academic research purposes. The first research question has a more theoretical approach, which is crucial to answer in order to proceed to the more methodological question. The research questions are as follows:

- How might museums be constructed as knowledge-shaping arenas and what are Finnish - Namibian cultural history's relations to post-colonial theories?
- Is it and how is it possible to create knowledge and reflect on learning experience about Finnish - Namibian cultural history museums through artistic practices?

When choosing the right methodology to answer the research question, one needs to break down what exactly the aim of the inquiry is. Answering how museums are constructed as knowledge-shaping arenas and how Finnish - Namibian cultural history is related to post-colonial theories is mainly based on literature. However, specific knowledge was obtained thorough visiting the two Namibian museums and meeting with their staff. When answering the question regarding the specific museums, the research deals with a case study and as Bent Flyvbjerg (2011) puts it:

“If you choose to do a case study, you are therefore not so much making a methodological choice as a choice of what is to be studied. The individual unit may be studied in a number of ways, for instance qualitatively or quantitatively, analytically or hermeneutically, or by mixed methods”. (p. 301)

For this research about the case study museums, a mixed method was chosen, mainly focusing on arts-based practices, visual culture analysis and reflections on learning processes. The research question is interested in investigating learning experience and reflections through artistic practices. For this reason, the choice of using arts-based research (ABR) is essential. These methods overlap, as do the research questions, but in the next sections, a more thorough look into the different approaches and their contribution in answering the research questions, is made.

2.2 CASE STUDIES

Flyvbjerg (2011) talks about common misunderstanding concerning the use of case studies. He points out how defining what case study means is problematic and “as a methodology is generally held in low regard, or is simply ignored, within the

academy". (p. 302) Some of the common misunderstandings include the notion of it being difficult to summarize and develop propositions and theories on the basis of specific case studies. In addition, general, theoretical knowledge might be considered more valuable than concrete case knowledge. Flyvbjerg also mentions the misconception that one cannot generalize on the basis of an individual case; therefore, it is thought, the case cannot contribute to scientific development. (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 302)

What then could be the reasons for basing a research on case studies and what contribution can they give to scientific development? According to Flyvbjerg (2011), generalizing on the basis of a single case is still possible and case studies alone or as supplement to other methods have the "the force of example" (p. 305) which is often underestimated. He also argues that formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development. Summarizing the case study does present difficulties, especially when dealing with analysing process, but Flyvbjerg challenges this by claiming that "Good studies should be read as narratives in their entirety." (Flyvbjerg, 2011, p.313) Lastly, he argues that "predictive theories and universals cannot be found in the study of human affairs. Concrete case knowledge is therefore more valuable

than the vain search for predictive theories and universals.”
(Flyvbjerg, 2011, p. 304)

The case study museums of this research are the Nakambale¹² and the Onandjokwe Medical museums in the North of Namibia. The Nakambale Museum is in the original Mission Station House of Finnish missionary, Martti Rautanen, built in 1893. The Finnish Missionary Society, FMS, was founded in 1859 and following the invitation of king, Shikongo shaKalulu of Ondonga, they sent their first group of five missionaries, Martti Rautanen among them. (Löytty, S., 2012, p.52-53) The museum building was renovated with funding provided by the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Mission and Finnada. In 1995, Dr Martti Eirola converted the house into the Nakambale Museum. The museum states that:

“the exhibitions that have been mounted in this gallery demonstrate the arrival of the Finnish Missionaries, the important role that the Finnish Mission has played in the development of the Church in northern Namibia and in exile, during Namibia’s war of liberation”. (Nakambale Museum, Olukonda, Namibia 2018)

¹² Nakambale is another name for Martti Rautanen

The Onandjokwe Medical Museum, located a little less than 10 km away from Nakambale Museum, is also funded by the Finnish and it has been renovated under the project title 'Promoting and Preserving the cultural heritage of Northern Namibia'. More precisely the funding came from Embassy of Finland who enabled a restoration of the old Onandjokwe Hospital main building, so that it could become Namibia's first medical museum. The Hospital is also the first of its kind in northern Namibia, dating back to 1911 and it shares the story of the Onandjokwe Hospitals establisher, Finnish Dr. Selma Rainio, one of the first 13 women to qualify as a doctor in Finland and who arrived in Ondonga in 1908 and lived and worked at Onandjokwe up to her death in 1939. (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 78)

Today, both museums are owned by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), but recently in 2018 the operational activities have transferred to Oniipa Town Council. The Museums Association of Namibia (MAN) acts as an umbrella organization that represents all the Museums in Namibia, facilitates them and gives guidance with the exhibitions. (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 79)

For this research these museums, which have a collection of the cultural history of Finland and Namibia, are used as so

called “peek holes” through which the cultural setting and history can be analysed. Investigating the case studies through arts-based methodology leads to a negotiation of how these museums have been constructed as representation of Finnish - Namibian cultural history in relation to post-colonial theories and how they act as learning environments. The learning processes include unfolding of meanings and social contexts, post-colonial discourse and exploration of the possibilities artistic practices offer for reflecting on the matter.

2.3 ARTS-BASED RESEARCH

This research uses arts-based methodology which “is ‘born’ out of deep interest and passion for an encounter, relationality, sensation, phenomenon, or issue rather than a quest to answer a question or address a problem.” As argued by Suominen, Kallio-Tavin, Hernández-Hernández, (2018, p. 109) The chosen methodology plays a crucial role, for creating the negotiations about arts-based learning in a museum. One could even say that this thesis investigates its own methodology. Arts-based methods in this research, focus on the possibilities of contemporary artistic practices. The notion of “contemporary” is elaborated in the following chapter. Through creative processes, a reflection on museums, cultural history and the post-colonial is made, creating an analysis of how knowledge can be obtained, shared and interpreted in

different ways. The artistic part of the research should not be considered as a separate art project attached to the study and creating an exhibition from the final objects is not the intention. Instead, the art acts as a “lived part of the flesh of the work, which crosscuts the entire work. The art practice is therefore a way of conducting research and a method for learning and knowing.” (Kallio, 2013 p.62)

As described in the Handbook of Arts-Based Research by Patricia Leavy (2008), arts-based research (ABR) has numerous strengths, such as offering new insights and learning, being useful for projects that aim to describe, explore, discover or that require attention to processes, forging micro-macro connection (such as our individual lives and larger contexts), emphasizing holistic and transdisciplinary approaches, evocating, captivating and raising awareness, critical consciousness and empathy. In addition, ABR can unsettle stereotypes, challenge dominant ideologies, include marginalized voices and perspectives, invite (non-academic) participations, open-up multiplicity in meaning making and produce research outcomes that are accessible to public audience, such as art exhibitions. (Leavy, 2018, p.9-10) What then is meant by researching and knowing through art?

“Before getting involved in a more detailed discussion of principles regarding the nature of artistic knowing and research, let me try to say as briefly as possible that the conversation and the overall subject of ABR cannot be accurately approached without first acknowledging and accepting the determining influence of paradigms and their accompanying belief systems.” (McNiff, 2018, p. 25)

Paradigms and belief systems influence our views of art and in addition, one must face the impossibility of trying to answer the simple but challenging question: what is art? An attempt can be made, on a general or even personal level, but there is a risk of sounding shallow and banal. These are very central questions for this research, and arguably tricky to answer in a satisfying way. However, this research evolves from my background and long-time interest in contemporary art, which has a major influence on the thoughts and theorizing, and which perhaps gives some aid in trying to frame what is being dealt with in this context. In the following section, the link between contemporary art and this research is elaborated.

2.3.1 **Contemporary Art**

Anita Fricke (2010) discusses contemporary art according to Gilles Deleuze and argues how for Deleuze the term 'contemporary' is ontological rather than chronological term. Before pondering more on what is meant by the term in this thesis context, it is important to realize the absence of a fixed definition about its meaning and how it is often used, not as a reference to certain art historical era, but the current field, yet to be analysed by future historians. Fricke continues to propose how according to Deleuze contemporary art marks the emergence of something new "as the construction and expression of being in becoming. As a result, 'contemporary' art produces sensations that exceed any pre-given conditions of possibility, in a genetic 'event' that constructs a new future." (p.68) This research is interested in art's potential in exceeding pre-given conditions and construction of new futures and alternative storylines. What comes to the questions of placing the practice in a certain historical continuity, Fricke argues that:

"'Contemporary' art is forever out of time, 'to come', an 'absolute deterritorialization' that 'summons forth a new people' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 99). In this sense, Guattari suggests that instead of speaking of

‘Contemporary art’ we should speak of an ‘Atemporal art’ (Guattari 1994: 64)”. (Fricke, 2010, p.68)

To continue with the discussion about art and its function as a research instrument, I will argue that art presents a way to approach different phenomena and use critical reflective analysis on Self. Being engaged with creative processes can help to classify and analyse thinking processes and even see concrete thoughts. Put shortly, art presents an instrument for visualizing, negotiating, constructing, connecting, categorizing and challenging contexts. I tend to have criticality towards (my) art, but it is always accompanied with a sympathetic attitude and the appreciation of one of a kind experiences and unique subject positions. Having said that, throughout this research, an evaluation of the relationship between research, art and Self is continued, and the discussion includes a breakdown of both successes and failures in this matter.

2.3.2 **Different Artistic Approaches**

For the purposes of this research, I have made a decision to use a mixed media approach, such as observational drawing, photography and augmented reality design. A particular interest in collage has risen from notions such as “fragments”,

“relocations”, “the comprehensible”, “(un)connections” and “re-seeing”. Butler-Kisber (2008) describes the use of collage as inquiry as follows:

“[T]he researcher typically distils the “found” words/ideas from transcripts and then uses poetic structures to express the ideas in more compelling and sensory ways (Butler-Kisber, 2002; Richardson, 1994). The reverse is true for collage. This process moves from intuitions and feelings to thoughts and ideas. Image fragments are chosen and placed to give a “sense” of something rather than a literal expression of an idea and, as a result, the process “honours the unconnected and inexplicable” and allows for “re-seeing, relocating, and connecting anew”. (p. 269)

This can be comparable to other contemporary art practices and the importance of addressing the order of thinking processes. Kallio compares ABR to contemporary art by stating that in both cases “the artistic medium and rhetoric are chosen to best serve the content, not the other way around”. (2013, p. 68). A reason for the technical choices is also a result of a motif to first be familiarized with the case

studies, and choose technical approaches along the way, as seen best fitted for the issues at hand.

Another link between ABR, contemporary art and the reason for researching the case study museum in this manner, is the interest in more than just art. Suominen et al. (2018), point out that:

“it is fair to say that ABR is not necessarily or typically solely interested in artistic matters. Instead, and similar to contemporary art approaches, and processes, societal, cultural, political, philosophical, psychological, environmental, and educational phenomena are researched through and with art.” (p.104)

This thesis investigates an interwoven and entangled individual experience of the museums and touches upon societal, cultural, political, philosophical, psychological, environmental, and educational phenomenon. More-over, coming back to theories of knowledge, the processes of art-making are compatible with the notion of slippery, rhizomatic nature of knowledge. The explicit importance of accepting never completely knowing everything or being able to

represent and share our thoughts with other's is emphasized by Emmanuel Levinas (1969) according to McNiff (2018):

“even when we are most compassionate, insightful, and empathic, the other person can never be reduced to our own thoughts. Accepting what we do not know, and can never know, as Levinas suggests, helps us to be more completely open to the forces that are alive and moving through present experience unseen, perhaps innately searching for new ways of being organized and presented in awareness.” (McNiff, 2018, p. 30)

Then why would one choose a method that relies on such an ambiguous concept such as art? One possible reason could be that it relates with the idea of all knowledge being ambiguous and the impossibility of obtaining one Truth, no matter what the chosen methodology for research is. Does it mean that one should give up trying to examine the world or that all research is pointless? Perhaps because art *is* so difficult to understand, and one doesn't have a set of instructions to how to use it or how each spectator will interpret it, it relates with how all knowledge-transfer function and can present correlating findings. What it can be used for is to analyse attempts, failures, misunderstandings, motives, achievements or subjective, cultural, historical or societal

influences that are all part of self-expression, communication and conscious or subconscious meaning making. Practicing arts-based research involves different order and structures than a more conventional methodology and a fundamental premise is that the “end cannot be known at the beginning.” Also, art is infinitely variable and “both principles are again the opposite of the scientific method, in which pre-existing hypotheses are tested and positive outcomes are considered to be generalizable.” As McNiff argues, “art’s effects are based more on appeal and lasting power than on the attempt to establish scientific rules and laws.” (McNiff, 2018, p. 32)

2.3.3 **Self as an Instrument**

Last point about the choice of artistic practices, brings us to the decision of using myself as a tool for research. Not being able to rid myself from my subjective role as a researcher, it seems crucial to reflect on “who I am” and “what is my context for meaning-making”. Frankly, using myself as an instrument to the research project, presents an opportunity to answer the research question in a desired way and it stresses the fact that “I cannot choose to see from a distance, since I cannot abandon my participatory role”. (Kallio, 2013, p. 68) As I am dealing with learning processes, there is also a reason for reflecting on Self as a learner physically in the flesh

experiencing, encountering and participating in these settings.

Artistic processes mean different things for different people and when researching through art, it is essential not to rely on a misconception that each reader would relate with art in the same way. There is a common notion that art can be used for thinking, expressing, asking questions or representing. However, I argue that there is no universal language of art nor is there a shared or natural way for humans to express themselves through art. Not to even mention interpreting it. Every artistic process is entangled with a larger human and non-human network and a result of a singular life history. Of course, it can be said that humans have a born tendency for creativity, but what the meaning of art is for each one of us, remains a product of personal and cultural context.

2.3.4 A word about Ethics

I realize that researching a social setting that includes discourses such as post-colonialism, with a method that has emphasis on subjective experience and as the researchers comes from a western country, may seem problematic and even unethical. However, as is argued in this research there is value in the subjective experience and its critique also for

larger contexts and the aim is to hold on to a respectful manner to every party connected to this body of work. Moreover there is a wish that contemporary art can present a critical tool for societal, cultural and political discussions that can further develop justice and fair discussions.

3. THEORY AND BACKGROUND

This chapter discusses Finnish - Namibian history, certain post-colonial theories, museums as constructions, and relevant theories of knowledge. It should be remembered that this thesis only gives a general introduction of the history of the Finnish missionary work since the mid-19th century and key events of the colonial past that help the reader to have an understanding of the case studies. The aim of this theory and background discussion is also to elaborate the foundations and reasons for researching the experience of the artist/researcher in the case study museums. The key concepts and literature references, which are the backbone of the research, are introduced.

A key argument of this thesis is that a museum is always a construction and a representation. This means a small selection of the history and more-over, perceived differently

by every visitor, as is investigated in the data and discussion chapter. A museum is mainly about and framed for the selected context. This thesis is based on the idea museums can be divided into three layers, which are the history behind the museums, the construction (meaning knowledge-shaping arena) of the museum and the visitor's interpretation of the museum. All of them are framed and only a small selection of the endless possibilities of what has been and could be. The literature used for this thesis can be divided into those layers. Theories of knowledge set the foundation for understanding the visitor's interpretations and learning, but in practice the experience is discussed in the data and discussion chapter. The layers are discussed in the following sections, while it should be kept in mind that they overlap and intersect.

3.1 CULTURE, HISTORY AND THE POST-COLONIAL

The first section in the formation of the backbone of this investigation includes thoughts and theories about culture and history, more precisely the history of Namibia and Finland and their relationship. Post-colonial theories are relevant for analysing the arena, but their use is also problematized. These aspects will all lead to a better understanding of the setting of the researched museums.

Namibia, neighboured by Angola in the north, Zambia in the northeast, Botswana in the east and South Africa in the south, is located in the southwestern coast of Africa. Approximately 50% of the country's population are Ovambos. For more than a century, Namibia was occupied by different colonial powers, such as Germany from 1884 to 1915 and South African military rule from 1915 to 1919. "From 1920 Namibia, then South West Africa, became a League of Nations mandate under South Africa." The rule was later replaced by the United Nations, which in "1966 terminated the mandate and placed South West Africa under a UN council of Namibia." South African government rejected the decision, ignoring the International Court of Justice decision in 1971. This declared South African presence in Namibia illegal. After a long struggle, Namibia gained her independence from South Africa in 1990. (Löytty, S., 2012, p.31)

The Finnish Missionary Society came to Namibia in 1869, following the proposition of the German missionary Carl Hugo Hahn. (Löytty, S., 2012, p.31-32) They started their missionary activities in a "remote area called Ovamboland – or Ambomaa as it was known in Finland – in 1870, before the boundaries of the territory that was to become the Namibian nation had ever been drawn on a map." (Mtuleni and Shiweda 2011, p. 5) It cannot be denied that the missionaries "arrived

with a great deal of cultural baggage and a development agenda that was to have a dramatic impact on the region". (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 5) Even as the Finnish didn't have colonial motifs, the impact can be linked to the history of colonialism of European superpowers on the African continent. As the new religion was introduced, the cultural environment of the local people was not always thoroughly explored, and people became exposed to new cultural settings. "This process involved not only clear Christian propaganda, but as a side product also various European traditions attached to the primary message". (Löytty, S., 2012, p.52) The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN) was eventually registered as independent from the missionary society. This happened in 1954, when Rev. Leonard Auala was elected as the church leader and eventually consecrated as the first black Namibian bishop in 1963. (Löytty, S., 2012, p.53)

In addition to the introduction of Christianity, hospitals, and medical facilities, such as the Onandjokwe hospital, were also established by the missionaries. (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 5) Oral testimonies claim that the king of Ondonga, Kambonde "allocated the missionaries the piece of land – that is called Onandjokwe today – because it was a sacred place for traditional healers". The medical service was established

at a time of famine, and the need for a hospital was apparent. (Mtuleni and Shiweda 2011, p. 14) Among other things, introducing health education and training local people for nursing “provided one of the first opportunities for black women to have a paid job”. (Onandjokwe Medical Museum, 2018)

When mentioning that the Finnish missionaries started their activities in “Ovamboland”, it is important to note that the term is not problem-free. Löytty, O., (2006) in fact sees it more as a concept, rather than a geographical location. (Löytty, O., 2006, p. 28) Mtuleni and Shiweda (2011) explains how the term “Ambomaa” was used by the Finnish missionaries to label the region of Africa inhabited by Oshiwambo speaking people who lived in a number of independent kingdoms, and how some Finns saw and still see – it as a sovereign independent country. Mtuleni and Shiweda claims that many first-time Finnish visitors still expect this. They continue explaining the image of Ovamboland in Finland and share Soiri and Peltola’s (1999, p. 9) writing, how in Finnish schools, it was “represented as standard example of an ‘uncivilised backward’ country, to which the missionaries had been sent to preach the gospel and bring the light of God and civilisation to the heathen.” (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 5)

It is interesting, how according to Mtuleni and Shiweda (2006), in a similar manner many Ovambos are not familiar with the name Finland, let alone the term 'Finnish' and they "still refer to the Finnish missionaries as "Aasoomi" not knowing that this is actually what they are referred to in Finnish." it seems that the name "Suomi" is similarly almost seen as a concept and it has remained an important part of the image of missionaries that Ovambos have until today. (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011, p. 5) What comes to the image of the Ovambo people in Finland, Löytty, O., (2006) argues how in Missionary literature, the presentation of the Ovambo Other has been fluctuating between two binaries: xenophobia and xenophilia, more-over, how xenophobic presentations emphasise the difference between the Finnish and the Ovambo people, and how the xenophilia highlights the idealized similarity. (Löytty, O., 2006, p. 285) This is what Bhabha also touches upon, when he talks about phobia and fetish and "'otherness' which is at one an object of desire and derision, an articulation of difference contained within the fantasy of origin and identity". (Bhabha, 1983, p. 19)

As was mentioned earlier, the impact of the Finnish missionary work can be linked to the history of colonialism. First, it should be noted that imperialism is not something that has happened 'elsewhere'. "Rather, imperialism and the

invention of race were fundamental aspects of Western, industrial modernity” (McClintock, 1995, p.5) and when examining it, focus should be on the Western identity.

When the relationship of the Finnish and the Namibians is examined, certain imperialistic practices become apparent, which tell a great deal about the Finnish. Such a practice, regarding the fluctuation between emphasizing differences or similarities, is the post-colonial theorist, Homi Bhabha’s notion of mimicry. McClintock elaborates the concept according to Bhabha as a “flawed identity imposed on colonized people who are obliged to mirror back an image of the colonials but in imperfect form”. (McClintock, 1995, p.62) As was visible in the photographs exhibited in both of the case study museums, teaching local people to dress in a European manner, was a striking example of the Finnish imposing their own identity. Bhabha also talks about ambivalence in the colonial discourse, which shows light on Finnish practices in seeking to “reproduce the image of a ‘reformed, recognizable Other . . . that is almost the same but not quite’ (Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man” p. 126)” (McClintock, 1995, p.63)

As is discussed in the theories of knowledge chapter, this thesis argues that no knowledge is fixed. This creates an interesting tension when researching museum’s whose main purpose, it can be argued, is to freeze certain knowledge in

their exhibitions showcases. Another layer for this dilemma comes forth when borrowing certain colonial discourses which are dependent "on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness." (Bhabha, 1983, p. 18). Bhabha argues how "Fixity, as the sign of cultural/historical/racial difference in the discourse of colonialism, is a paradoxical mode of representation: it connotes rigidity and an unchanging order as well as disorder, degeneracy and daemonic repetition." (Bhabha, 1983, p. 18) As has been argued, rigidity brings forth certain problematics regarding knowledge. Because the idea of 'fixity' is close to the idea of 'stereotype', an interest in the challenging of these concepts was sought for. Bhabha argues that stereotype proclaims unchanging order and rigidity and that the group that is the victim of stereotypization is thought as essentially or ontologically "other," and this leads to objectification.

Bhabha also sees stereotype as a major discursive strategy and he calls it a form of "knowledge and identification that vacillates between what is always 'in place', already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated..." (Bhabha, 1983, p. 18) This thesis argues that even if something is anxiously repeated, it should not be taken for granted and more-over should be tested.

An important aspect to colonialism and imperialism, is introduced by Anne McClintock (1995), who problematized the traditional binaries (self/other, man/woman, colonizer/colonized) in the post-colonial discourses. She claims in her book *Imperial Leather*, that she does not see "race and ethnicity as synonyms with black or colonized." (McClintock, 1995, p.7) and even how "imperialism cannot be fully understood without a theory of gender power." (McClintock, 1995, p.6) The danger of investigating a post-colonial setting, such as the case study museums, is to forget how reality is more nuanced and making conclusions about history, or of anything else for that manner, runs the risk of oversimplification. When approaching museums that show a small fraction of the Finnish missionary history, it is relevant to avoid the urge to make statements based on binary notions. Chances are that learning about museums related to colonial history and isolating certain social categories, would not do justice to the complexity of the whole setting. McClintock (1995, p.9) argues that "no social category exists in privileged isolation; each comes into being in social relation to other categories, if in uneven and contradictory ways." She also refers to Kobena Mercer , who reminds us about the importance of the relations between the different social categories. Mercer cautions us against "invoking the mantra of 'race, class and gender' in such a way as to 'flatten out the complex and indeterminate relations between relations of

race, gender, ethnicity, and sexuality”’. (McClintock, 1995, p.62)

In addition, binary thinking (self-other, metropolis-colony, center-periphery, etc.) can be a problem when inspecting the axis of time as “the term postcolonialism nonetheless reorients the globe once more around a single, binary opposition : colonial – postcolonial”. When the theory is shifted from the axis of power to the axis of time, it can be considered even less productive regarding a political nuance, as “it does not distinguish between the beneficiaries of colonialism (the ex-colonizers) and the casualties of colonialism (the ex-colonized).” (McClintock, 1995, p.11)

Finally, it should be noted that post-colonial doesn’t simply mean the critique of colonialism. As is discussed in Edward’s Said’s work *Culture and Imperialism* (1994) it also means analysing strategies of writing against and anew and on the other hand, tracing colonialism in Western literature. To put shortly, it is interested both in the “influences of imperialism and influences of actions against imperialism.” The purpose is hence both to deconstruct and reconstruct colonial discourses. (Löytty, O., 2006, p.50)

3.2 THE CONSTRUCTION OF A MUSEUM

This chapter investigates on a general level, the construction and forces which affect the form and shape of knowledge in museums. Several key theoretical references are applied for the understanding and analysing how a museums function as knowledge-shaping arenas. This information will further help the reader understand what influences the learning experience, discussed in the data chapter.

When researching the museums, (without trying to create a binary separation), it is interesting to examine who they actually tell most about. As Löytty O. explains according to Said (1991), western research and their image of the East or the "orient" as it is known in Europe and United States, actually tells more about the west than the east. (Löytty, O., 2006, p 48) When starting the discussion about museums as constructions, it is likewise important to remember that a museum is in fact, a western creation. In addition, in this research context, museums should be considered as environments of self-directed learning based on experience, focusing on how context determines the interpretation of objects. (Hooper, Greenhill, 1992, p.i) Museums have also played their own part in colonizing processes and recently attempts have emerged to decolonize these institutions. In her work *Decolonizing Museums: Representing Native*

America in National and Tribal Museums (2012) Amy Lonetree brings forth an important question from native American people: "How can we begin to decolonize a very Western institution that has been so intimately linked to the colonization process?". This thesis is not interested in creating decolonization in the case study museums per se, but it is important to note that they do not stand as neutral outsiders, and when approaching them as learning platforms, their colonial role should be considered.

Certain structures of knowledge and even rules for the production of truth have been a part of museums, all the way from the period of the Renaissance episteme, the classical age, and the modern age. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p.191) It is also important to note that even as a western construction and with a history of having a rigid form, museums have evolved in different ways and taken varieties of different shapes. In fact, as Hooper-Greenhill (1992, p.191) has argued, "There is no essential museum. The museum is not a pre-constituted entity that is produced in the same way at all times". She continues by stating and referencing Foucault how in addition, "such identities as are constituted are subject to constant change as the play of dominations shifts and new relations of advantage and disadvantage emerge. 'Truth is of the world: it is produced by virtue of multiple constraints'

(Foucault, 1977b:13)."¹³ One of the most important questions behind this thesis has been influenced by above realization and alike the authors' question: "But if museums are places in which we may come to know new things, and where our perceptions may radically change, what is the nature of this knowing, and how are these changes brought about?" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p.2)

It is undeniable that the interaction between Finnish missionaries and local communities has left a significant cultural fingerprint in Namibia. Following the thought of museums as places of changing perception, an interesting question would be about the role of the museums in the nature of knowing about the interaction between Finnish missionaries and local communities. More-over, how are these changes brought about in relation to the museums established by Finnish people? It can be assumed that a new cultural fingerprint is left by these museums, which albeit done with good intentions, cannot be considered as neutral in their cultural and knowledge creating influence. For example, as a result of the missionary work "many Christian converts adopted Finnish names whilst the missionaries also influenced the development of a new forms and fashions of clothing in

¹³ See: Foucault, M. (1977) 'The political function of the intellectual', *Radical Philosophy*, 17, pp.12– 14.

northern Namibia (Shigwedha, 2006: 196-198)” (Silvester, Tjizezenga, Kaanante, 2015, p. 5). Sharing this history in the museums also creates new culture and discussion around the names and fashion and in its own way, performs them into existence.

Perhaps there is an assumption that material things cannot be understood in different ways or even misunderstood and that museums are objective and do not have a manipulative influence on the material. Hooper and Greenhill argue otherwise:

“Although we are familiar with the way in which advertisements, for example, select and manipulate images of material objects in relation to their associative and relational potentials, it is not understood that the ways in which museums ‘manipulate’ material things also set up relationships and associations, and in fact create identities (Barthes, 1977).” (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p.6)

They argue that material things can be understood in a multitude of different ways, meaning can be manipulated as

required and many different meanings can be read from things. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p.6)

One way of influencing the meaning, is the actual decision of what is to be showcased. Perhaps the exclusions, inclusions, and priorities determining whether objects become part of collections create systems of knowledge? It is, interesting how in Namibian museums the number of possessed artifacts is so small, that what is being exhibited is mostly a result of what is available. Silvester, Tjizezenga and Kaanante, mention this in comparison to larger museums of the world:

“Indeed, many of our regional museums show all the objects in their collection in what might be called ‘open shelf’ displays. Our museums contrast with the larger museums of the world which are like icebergs with most of their volume hidden from view”. (2015, p. 4)

Another question is how the objects in display are classified, and whether it favours certain ways of knowing? Problems might arise if there is a failure to analyse, understand the practices of the present such as classifications, or accommodating a plurality of histories. Both the Nakambale and Onandjokwe Medical Museums showed attempts of crossing over strong public/private division meaning the

division into either 'members of the public' or 'museum curators'. (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 7) According Silvester (2018), the Nakambale Museums exhibits photographs taken by missionaries, but for which comments were collected from the local community today. Onandjokwe Medical Museum even exhibited a poem from a local community member, Rev. Julius Mtuleni. These practices, as well as addressing the agency over these museums over to the local authorities, is argued in this thesis, can be classified as decolonialization and creation of spaces of empowerment. Lonetree (2012, p.164) argues that "museums have the potential— through both their exhibits and their programming— to promote healing, revitalization, and nation building for Indigenous peoples". Even if this thesis does not take part in those practices exactly, it is crucial to remember when researching the museums at hand, that such processes are happening by the influence of Namibian Museums Association, and the institutions do not in the present time belong to Finland or represent Finnish administration. Another question is whether the exhibition layout might have traces of Finnish or other Western ideology and knowledge classification. For this auto-criticism and self-reflection is needed in Finland, but agency remains within the museum's current staff.

3.3 THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE

As was discussed in the introduction, the issue representing findings is one of the first topics of this theses. This is also related to the representation that happens in the museums, in the art-works created through the methodology and what has been investigated in the post-colonial discussions of this work. The concepts representation, or subject-position for that matter, are not straight forward and easily comprehensible. A notion of non-representation, comes from a human geographer Nigel Thrift, is introduced to these negotiations. This theory is related to Deleuzian concepts such as affect, which will also be discussed. These thoughts can be classified as deriving from Poststructuralist philosophies, which reject the possibility of a definite truth. (Mertens, 2015, p.9) There are disagreements about how to define poststructuralism, but perhaps a common thread running through all views is that "*the limits of knowledge play an unavoidable role at its core.*" (Williams, 2014, p. 1) Values and conditions are never fixed or either true or false "Instead, the values are pure movements (the varying intensities of sensations and affects) and the formal conditions are the necessary conditions for these movements: for their resistance to identification." (Williams, 2014, p. 57) In this thesis knowledge is seen limited, and that realization as something that needn't be avoided.

Before explaining non-representational theory, I will briefly share a description of representation and colonized subject and why I think it is relevant in this context. Grant Hamilton (2011) has written about Deleuze and Coetzee on representation, which links to colonial discourses. Hamilton argues that "knowledge of the past is inseparable from the activity of representing it." (Hamilton, 2011, p.155) What he means is elaborated when he talks about the colonized subject, which is "locked within the very framework of representation" (Hamilton, 2011, p. xiv) and actually derives from colonial discourse. He questions representation as a "proposition of a singular narrative of existence" (Hamilton, 2011, p.155) and sees that representation has a role in the "construction of structures of knowing". (Hamilton, 2011, p.xii) In the colonial setting, he problematizes the subjects' ability to resist the colonial structures being "firmly enmired in colonial discourse". (Hamilton, 2011, p.xvi) He argues that "It would seem most obvious that to examine the colonized subject one must, in some way, propose a retrieval of the subject from the exercise of representation of colonial discourse." (Hamilton, 2011, p.xvi) The issues of representation become apparent in the data production and analysis of this thesis and a negotiation about their use is included later.

Thrift begins explaining non-representational theory by arguing how “human life is based on and in movement”. (Thrift, 2007, p. 5) He questions what is meant by perception, representation and practice in everyday life and supports an experimental rather than a representational approach to the social sciences. Thrift wishes to go beyond constructivism with motifs of movement and the “anti-substantialist ambition of philosophies of becoming” (Thrift, 2007, p. 5). He summarizes his theory with three main questions, which are:

“First it questions the divide between theoretical and practical work by ceding certain theoretical conundrums to practice. Second, by questioning what is in the world, it exposes a whole new frontier of inhuman endeavor, what might be called the construction of new mattering, along with their typical attachments, their passion, strengths and weaknesses, their differences and indifferences. Third, by intensifying the intensity of being, it is able to question the load precognitive conditions that make up most of what it is to be human. In other words, or so I will argue, it is possible to boost the content of bare life, making it more responsive, more intensive and more open to ethical interventions”.

(Thrift, 2007, p. 22)

Thrift's aim is to adapt the "full range of registers of thought" and for this he emphasizes the importance of affect and sensation, which he argues to be "fully as important as signs and significations but that only recently have begun to receive their due." (Thrift, 2007, p. 12 - 13) Thrift's theory resonates with arts-based research methodologies and hence this thesis. His suggestions for engaging with the full range of registers of thought lays foundations for the multisensory approaches and physical learning processes which will be evaluated in the data and discussion chapter.

Perhaps it is important to elaborate the Deleuzian terminology, such as *affect*, which is used in this thesis and which also Thrift has appropriated. Deleuze and Guattari write in *A Thousand Plateaus* that "Affects are becomings". (Deleuze, Guattari, 1987, p. 256) Parr explains how Deleuze sees them as something which produces "a sensory or abstract result and is physically and temporally produced." However, affect is not the synonym to emotion and "emotion and affect – if affect is intensity – follow different logics and pertain to different orders". (Massumi, 2002, p. 27) Parr continues the discussion around the notion and points out how "Reaction is a vital part of the Deleuzian concept of affective change". Earlier he has noted that according to Deleuze chance is influenced by variety of factors, such as "geography,

biology, meteorology, astronomy, ecology and culture". (Parr, 2010, p.12) In this thesis, affect is seen as a reaction with the emphasis on bodily or embodied experience.

Another term used in this thesis, and which derives from Deleuze's writings is rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari explain how "any point of a rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be." They continue with stating that a rhizome differs unquestionably from a tree or root which, according to them "plots a point, fixes an order." (Deleuze, Guattari, 1999, p.7) In this thesis, rhizome is considered a term that fits the description of knowledge formations and rejects a top-down hierarchy.

The concept of *singularity* is also mentioned in this research. The reason for using the term in this precise context is to elaborate the characteristics of the learning experience. Kallio-Tavin (2013) has used it in her dissertation, also founded on arts-based methodology and she describes the Deleuzian notion by stating how "Singularity should not be understood as the qualities of things or matters, or be confused with the personality, singularity is the uniqueness, the unique combination of points of tension and the potentiality of things of matter". (Kallio-Tavin, 2013, p. 50) Parr also talks about the term in a similar way and calls it a

“unique point”. He adds how it is also a “point of perpetual recommencement and of variation.” Later Parr reminds us that singularity, just as the other terms which Deleuze uses in his writings “shifts and bears different inflections in different contexts but is always related to perception, subjectivity, affectivity and creation.” (Parr, 2010, p.256)

Before finishing the theory discussion, a note shall be made about yet another poststructuralist, Michel Foucault’s theories. A noticeable portion of this investigation’s thoughts have been influenced by his notions of knowledge and power. Foucault sees “reason and truth to be relative, rather than absolute concepts” and has made the proposal that “both reason and truth have historical, social, and cultural contexts” and have been produced by people. (Foucault, 1981, p. 8) Hooper-Greenhill also refer to Foucault’s *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970), and point out the important fact that “Just as rationality is not absolute, but relative and shaped by culture, so what counts as knowing has varied across the centuries.” (Hooper, Greenhill, 1992, p. 12) Lastly, let us be reminded about Foucault’s tools for approaching history. He has rejected the notion of a “continuous, smooth, progressive, totalising, developmental history.” His alternative vision was based on ‘effective history’, which emphasises “discontinuity, rupture, displacement, and dispersion (Foucault, 1974:4).

The targets of Foucault's work are not 'institutions', 'theories', or 'ideologies', but 'practices', with the aim of grasping the conditions which make these acceptable at a given moment (Foucault, 1981a:5)". (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992, p. 10)

3.4 CONCLUSION OF THEORY AND BACKGROUND

Before continuing into the discussions around data production and gathering, perhaps it should be explained what the above discussions mean for this research and how they appear later. To conclude and sum up the theories and explanations of the background, the reader should be reminded of the following ideas:

Finland has been practicing missionary work in Namibia since 1870 and unfortunately following from this, local cultures were influenced and changed in an imperial manner and various Finnish and European traditions were inflicted on the local people. The Nakambale Museum has been established in 1996 in an original Mission Station House of Finnish missionary Martti Rautanen, built in 1893. In addition to religious approaches, Finnish missionaries also introduced hospitals and medical facilities, such as the first of its kind in Northern Namibia, the Onandjokwe hospital which was established by doctor Selma Rainio in 1911. Today the

Onandjokwe Medical Museum shares the life story of Rainio and is located in one of the old hospital buildings. These two museums are encountered in the next section, and I, the artist/researcher, also recognize my relation to Namibia as a result of this history.

Northern Namibia, where both museums are situated, has also been called Ovamboland or “Ambomaa” by the Finnish. The area has obtained a concept like approach by Finnish schools and literature, and is sometimes mistakenly seen as independent, yet uncivilised country, where missionaries “preach to the heathen”. Finnish literature about missionaries shows how certain parties in Finland tend to emphasise the difference between the Finnish and the Ovambo people (xenophobic) or highlight the idealized similarity (xenophilia). Finland has likewise special place in northern Namibian history and still today plays a part in the image of missionary work. The Finnish missionary work can in fact, be linked to the history of colonialism and when examining it, focus should be on the western identity. Finnish practices have sought to reproduce the image of the “other”, which is almost the same but not quite, for example, by teaching locals to dress like the missionaries and adopt Finnish names. These points have been made, in order to understand the unique relationship between Finland and Namibia and to remember how this

thesis is nonetheless, made from a Finnish perspective. Focusing on the western identity is included in the analysing of artistic processes in the next chapter.

The notion of fixity creates an interesting tension for this research. Some museum practices and certain post-colonial concepts, such as stereotypes are based on fixity. Stereotypes might lead to objectification and hence, should be challenged. When researching the case study museums about Finnish – Namibian history, one should be cautious of binary thinking and oversimplifications, such as isolating social groups and forgetting relations between race, gender, ethnicity and sexuality. Post-colonial research can also mean the study of the influence of the acts against colonialism and cultural imperialism and even as this research supports a post-colonial view, its own influence on culture might be a subject to research.

Museums are originally western creations and can have their own part in colonialism, hence they shouldn't be considered as neutral outsiders. They shape knowledge but have evolved in different ways. This thesis is interested in what kind of knowing is brought about in museums, as is the aim of the data analysis. In addition to missionary work done by Finland,

also the museums sharing this history, might influence and leave a fingerprint in the current culture.

This research sees museums as environments of self-directed learning, based on experience. Some ways in which meaning can be manipulated in museums are the classifications or choices in what is showcased. It should be mentioned that in the case study museums, almost every item that is possessed is exhibited, although choices have been made in what is to be conserved in the first place. Nakambale Museum and Onandjokwe Medical Museum have showed attempts to cross over the public / private division and they can even be considered spaces of empowerment. Today the museums do not belong to Finland or have a Finnish management. Agency over them is within the current local administration. This is crucial to remember, since any critique over the museums will be directed towards the local staff.

This research derives from poststructuralist philosophies and rejects the possibility of a definite truth. This notion is important when talking about something as intangible as history and art. Representations, which are inevitably faced with this visual culture research, can be problematic. They might involve a colonized subject, and it is argued to be challenging for the subject to resist colonial structures. Non-

representational approaches see the human life based on movement. This once again, highlights how the notion of fixity might be problematic. Affect and sensation should not be rejected in research as they can assist with engaging with the full range of registers of thought.

Certain Deleuzian terms are used in this thesis, such as affect, rhizome and singularity. Affect is related to the arts-based learning experience and seen a reaction with the emphasis on bodily or embodied experience. Rhizome describes knowledge formation in which any point can be connected to any other. History and this research can also be seen as rhizomes. Singularity describes the uniqueness of the encounters in this research and it is related to perception, subjectivity and affectivity. Finally, it is noted how the whole thesis has been influenced by the Poststructuralist, Michel Foucault and his idea of reason and truth having historical, social, and cultural contexts, being produced by people. Foucault also challenges the notion of a developmental history, which is one thread in this work.



Figure 1 "Memory of Fatherland from the Finnish private school in Swakopmund,
Nakambale Museum, 2018

4. DATA AND DISCUSSION

The empirical data for this thesis, has been collected/produced through arts-based methodology. It shouldn't be considered as a separate entity, or as art that will ever be finished, but more of an ongoing process alongside the research with learning journal entries. However, one can say that the focus of the art is on the two case study museums and on the artist/researcher's learning processes about them. The previous chapters have elaborated the historical background and assisted the reader in understanding how museums are constructed as knowledge-shaping arenas, as well as Finnish - Namibian cultural history's relations to post-colonial theories.

Next, I will discuss whether and how it is possible to create knowledge and reflect on the learning experience about these museums through artistic practices. This research has a specific motif to ponder on the meaning and significance of a physical visit to a museum, the embodied knowledge and nonrepresentational or intangible side of the experience and that will be discussed. This chapter also attempts to answer how the different layers discussed in the theory and background section, are seen in the processes of art-making. In other words, what meanings does art create in this context and what significances are there in processes of art-making / the physical act or the final art object.

The data was gathered and produced during a visit to Namibia from 15th December 2017 – 21st February 2018 and specifically the Nakambale Museum and Onandjokwe Medical Museum. During the visit, my role was of a contemporary artist and researcher. In general, the time was also used for learning about Finland's history and cultural influence in Namibia, meeting with Namibian museum curators, historians, visitors and the director of Museums Associations of Namibia.

4.1 EXPERIENCE OF THE ARTIST / RESEARCHER

As was discussed in the methodology chapter, the learning processes rely on the created art and physical encounters of the artist/researcher. The art processes brought forward issues of representing embodied knowledge and a singular experience. More-over, they created negotiations between the experience and the theory. The experience also included encounters with people, for example discussions with the historian, Dr. Shekutaamba V.V Nambala¹⁴ and Rev. Alpo Enkono. All these human encounters had specific influence on the perception of the case studies.

The following part will elaborate the different artistic approaches and reflect on and analyse them as well as the more formal learning that occurred as a result. As is noticeable, the two museums are not discussed in separate sections, and in fact they are mostly viewed as two branches of the same experience. It should be also remembered that the art works presented in the thesis are only small portion of a vast amount of data and as is argued, a result of subjective choice as well as a representation of something that can never be fully verbalized. As the reader may notice, the art work's themes overlap explicitly, but they can roughly be divided into photo elicitation, observational drawing, self-portrait,

¹⁴ The Presiding Bishop of ELCIN.

documenting, augmented reality collages and abstraction as forms of encounter and research about the above-mentioned museums. Technique has been chosen to best suit the question, as in contemporary art. The texts written in cursive, should be read as entries from a learning journal.

4.1.1 Photo Elicitation

What is meant by photo elicitation in this research context is perhaps different from how it is elsewhere understood. The term derives from Noora Pyyry's (2016) article: *Learning with the city via enchantment: photo-walks as creative encounters*, where photo elicitation offers a means for conversations or interviews around photographs between people. In this context it is used for self-reflective practices. Pyyry explains how she approaches "learning as a process of rethinking the world that happens via the surprising experience of 'enchantment'. This process becomes possible by dwelling, that is, by forming meaningful multisensory engagements with one's surroundings." (Pyyry, 2016, p. 102) She explains how the process is affectual and she presents photo-walks as a way of sensing and thinking "with" photography and participating in the world. (Pyyry, 2016, p 112) She says that "Photo-walking encouraged students to pay attention to ordinary, everyday things and spaces. This can inspire new associations and open up new worlds.

Knowledge grew from engaging with these spaces – verbal reflection and formal learning happened later.” (Pyyry, 2016, p 112-113)

What I have used photo elicitation for is a mixture of photo-walks as explained by Pyyry (2016) and a more individual and place-specific practice. Similar to the photo-walking was the process of enhancement, multisensory and affectual engagement with surroundings and thinking “with” photography. Photographing items of particular interest and then reflecting on it afterwards seemed the best way to go about with the evaluating of the meaning of these objects. The learning which happened as a result of the engagement with the museum space, is discussed in the learning journal entry:

I spent a lot of time just sitting in the museums. First, I did not even want to read the texts on the walls and instead I just observed and felt the space, walked in the different rooms and outside the museum buildings. The following days, like a proper researcher, I decided to photograph everything! Everything had to be memorized, noticed, and documented; the photographs on the walls, the wall writings, the buildings from the outside, the cracks on the walls, the light, the dark etc. I wanted to build a relationship with everything -own

everything. One never knows what might turn out to be important.

The later days I let the "artist" in me take control. I am not a professional photographer, but I anyhow wanted to take aesthetically pleasing pictures, so I decided to let my eye be led by enhancing details and objects that meant something for me – which represented the experience.

Some of the objects which I decided to photograph and which seemed meaningful were the Finnish flag (fig. 1), block of birch (fig. 2), cake tin (fig 3), Arabia plates (fig. 4), reindeer horn candle holder (fig. 5), "Safarikuoro laulaa"- LP discs (fig. 6) nurse's dress (fig.7), "Oma Maa" -books (fig.8), and a photograph of Selma Rainio's birthplace in Saarijärvi Finland (fig. 9). They all spoke to me about Finland and through them I imagined the everyday lives of the missionaries, their national identity and / or attempts to hold on to their Finnishness. For many of the objects, I could not imagine why they had decided to bring them with....



Figure 2 Block of Birch, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Figure 3 Cake tin, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Figure 4 Arabia dishes, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Figure 5 Reindeer horn candle holder, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Figure 6 "Safarikuoro laulaa" -LP discs, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Figure 7 Nurse's dress, Onandjokwe Medical Museum, 2018



Figure 8 "Oma Maa" -books, Nakambale Museum, 2018



Egumbo lyevato lya Kuku Selma Rainio

Kuku Selma's birth-place, The Vicarage of Tarvaala, in Saarijärvi, Finland

Figure 9 A photograph of Selma Rainio's birthplace, Onandjokwe Medical Museum, 2018

As mentioned earlier, through photo elicitation a relationship was deepened with objects of significance. It turned out that I was mostly stricken by the Finnish artefacts. Most of these images were taken from the section of the Nakambale Museum called "Finnish Missionary life", which was located in the former guest room. The experience of as a Finnish visitor in a Namibian museum, coming face to face with, familiar, but personally and historically distant Finnish objects raised rich reactions. It can be understood that the artefacts are exhibited because they are the ones that have remained from those times. However, today they tell a specific story about Finnishness and raise questions of their importance to the missionaries.

I can imagine that for someone who has never visited Finland, seeing the Finnish everyday objects can be misleading about how Finnish people live. More-over, I argue, that even for a Finnish visitor, they do not represent the whole story. In the museums they are presented as fragments of the history of moving and living abroad and bringing a cultural baggage along. But why were only Finnish objects part of the missionaries' lives? Or were only objects from Finland decided to be presented? I could imagine that missionaries started adopting local Namibian objects in everyday life use. Both museums did also showcase multiple Namibian artefacts, but

especially in the Nakambale Museum, they were situated in the opposite end of the building. This can raise questions of binary thinking. Perhaps their classification is a result of practical reasons, but I argue that some level of rigidity in the depiction of cultures has been a conscious or unconscious factor.

Using photography as a technique also brought out a common researcher's attitude and misconception that it would be possible to immortalize everything about the experience. I also faced the challenge of trying to represent social influences or reasons behind the museum construction, through these pictures, which turned out to be too ambitious. One motif was to point out how different cultural influences are present in various details and how different nationalistic objects are presented. A question arose, that perhaps there was some hidden agenda in their hierarchy. Reflecting on it now, it is obvious that not everything was or could ever be commemorated or proven. More-over, it might not be productive to search for too much hidden symbolism.

What is interesting, is that each second of the experience involved some level of a choice. The decision to highlight different parts of a visual surroundings happens for very complex reasons. One such a reason is that of trying to

emphasize certain historical events. Some, like was argued, were also influenced by an attempt to represent the embodied experience. However, these visuals might only open to the actual photographer. Yet, all the photographs tell something about how the photographer is in the space (meaning the angle, height etc.), personal habits of taking pictures and criteria of what is important, interesting, “well-photographed” or beautiful. Photographs, especially in this context are a subjective take and they create a layer of interpretation about the history, the museums and the artist/researcher’s experience. This could be called a “broken-telephone” effect, where the original historical event or object has gone through so many processes that it has accumulated a completely new set of meanings.

It is also interesting to note the connotations that are in capturing something in a photograph when, in fact one must acknowledge, most of encounters happened in-between the acts of photographing. Even if there is a motif to depict the multisensory movement, only the very small frozen moment can be photographed. It should however, be noted how the experience of photographing is multisensory and creates its own physical layer to the experience of an event or space. Through the act of photographing, the space was experienced in a specific way, hence affecting the research.

4.1.2 **Observational drawing**

Observational drawing happened after I had spent a few days in the museums. Certain objects and spaces started appearing as aesthetically and thematically intriguing in a way, which called for a deeper pondering. The process was described as follows:

Observational drawing unfolded surprising possibilities of engaging with my research environment. I discovered how the act of drawing complicated objects such as the mangle (fig. 10) and microscope (fig. 11), deepened my connection with the artefacts as well as created (even humorous) reactions towards the absurdity of cultural imperialism.

When I was drawing the mangle, I let my hand work on the curves and twirls without worrying how accurate and geometrically correct the outcome would become. I was staring at the object for a long time, creating my own impression of a Finnish missionary's everyday item, producing a representation, choosing to present and frame this specific object, from a specific angle, with a specific technique and with my specific motif.

I wanted to draw the microscope because to me, person who doesn't know about the medical world, it looked generic and aesthetically fascinating. I, myself, was tempted to portray it

as a symbol of western science and civilization and of a scientific vision of looking at the world. I realized later that my aim was perhaps naïve and too ambitious. Choosing the microscope for the subject of the drawing, was hence an obvious result of my own desires and an influenced by my own academic cultural background.

Drawing myself (feet) sitting on the ground next to Martti Rautanen's ox wagon (fig. 12), connected and brought my presence into the setting. It was fascinating to use the same approach and drawing technique on both the museum object and myself. It reminded me of how museums don't exist in isolation from their visitors...

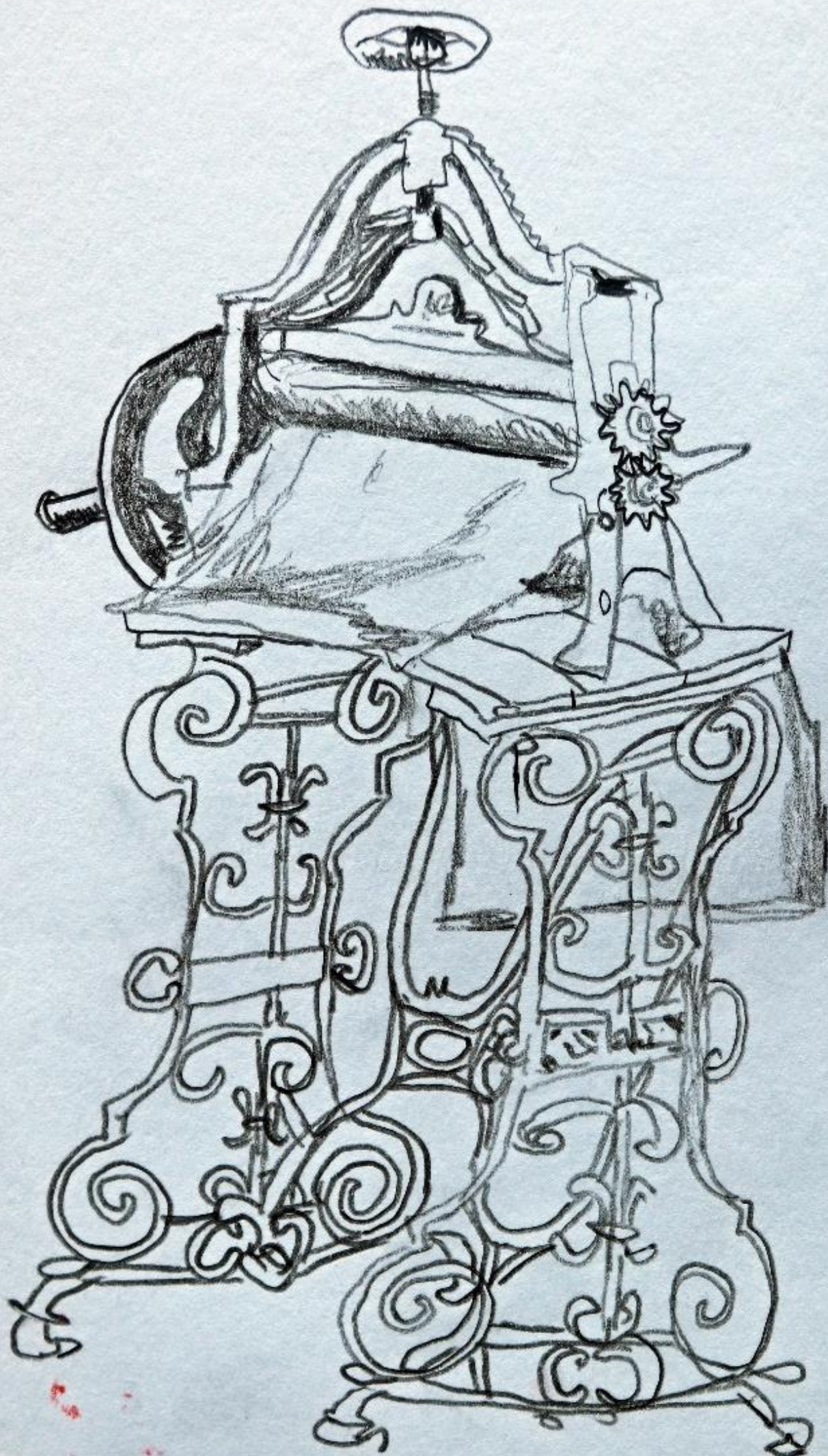


Figure 10 Drawing of a mangle in Nakambale Museum, 2018

Skopein mikros.
For: malaria, HIV

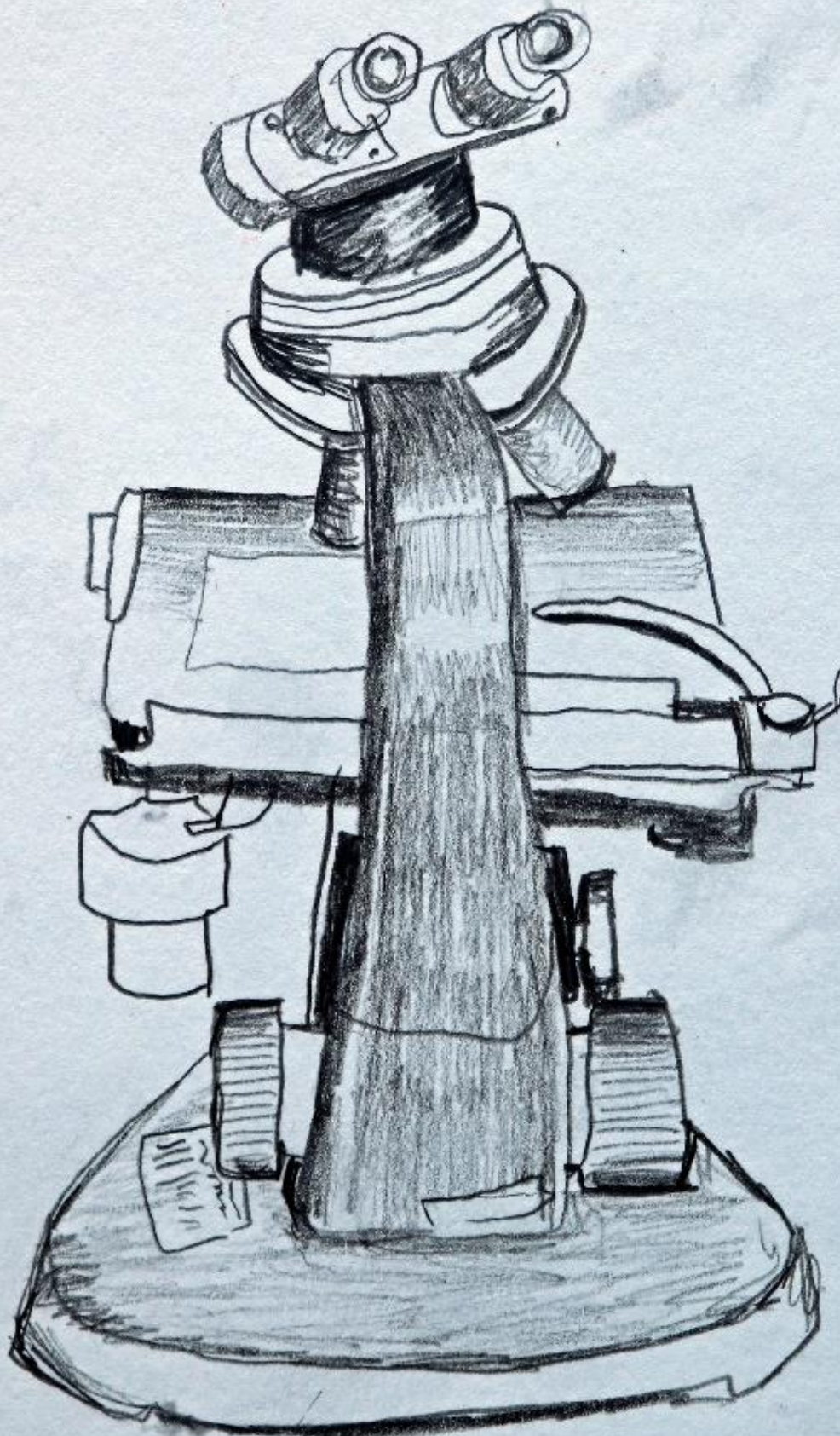


Figure 11 Drawing of a microscope in Onandjokwe Medical Museum, 2018



Figure 12 Drawing of self and Martti Rautanen's ox wagon, 2018

Observational drawing, perhaps even more than photo elicitation, enabled the building of a relationships with objects and spaces of significance. Alike, it was an affectual experience, influenced by series of choices and a manifestation of the “broken-telephone” effect. Perhaps because I am more accustomed to drawing than photographing, I found it more of a self-expressive medium.

My personal taste in drawing, and art in general, is somewhat different from photorealistic depictions. I find points of collapse and mistakes something that make art more interesting. More-over, leaving some parts unfinished, was my attempt to move away from fixed knowledge to more open-ended alternatives.

It should be remembered that my artistic practices are mostly learned and adopted from a western schools and traditions. Hence all the visualizations act, to some level, as manifestations of a western view. As a comparison, an interesting discussion around the Ovambo life view occurred with Nambala (2018). He explained how traditionally the northern Namibians have had a “round worldview”. He explained how “in Namibia everything used to be round: huts, fenced areas and even life. Always coming back to what once was”. (Nambala, 2018) What he meant by this, is that as they

saw the world as round in the horizon around them, everything else was hence designed in the circular shape, meaning their huts and life development, as examples. When the missionaries arrived in Namibia, they made the decision to build their homes in the European manner, meaning tall, rectangular buildings with thick walls and multiple rooms. They did however use local building material such as clay and wood. The Nakambale Museum building is an example of this fusion. The Onandjokwe hospital was first built as multiple round thatched huts with clay walls (Mtuleni and Shiweda, 2011 p.43) but after being destroyed by fire, a more European design was appropriated. Today it is difficult to discern what habits belong to what culture as we live in a global network and cultures do not exist in isolation.

My manners of observational drawing are none the less, absorbed from European art practices. My taste for the earlier mentioned imperfect art is a result of studying contemporary art and alternative creative practices in a Finnish University. Hence, I argue, that the art I produce, is inseparably filtered by my cultural background and even if I try to resist it, I will still be firmly enmired in my European reality.

An interesting thought about the similarities of art and research ascended from engaging in the creative practice of drawing. Being involved side by side with two practices I

noticed how human and incomplete both are. Both are mainly driven by subjective motifs and risk the possibility of reading into the material. At some point, I noticed a certain “hunt for representations” in my visit to museums. This can of course be called research, but it points out the impossibility of remaining neutral or objective. Another motif in both the artistic and research practice was a so called “hunt for mistakes” in the history and / or museums. Again, it is important to point out certain unethical or untrue facts, but another thing is whether it benefits anyone to be critical and become arrogant with hindsight.

When creating anything new for the public eye, albeit with humble intentions, it should be noted that it will leave cultural fingerprint of some sort. As was pointed out in the theory and background chapter, museums create new culture and discussion around the history which they exhibit and in their own way perform certain realities into existence.

An important question is why I chose specific objects as subjects for the drawings? And more-over, why were mostly objects chosen and not other things such as space or people? Looking back at the learning event, it is once again obvious how even when trying to approach the museum with an open mind, the mind naturally focuses on the artefacts and

prioritizes them above anything else in the museum. Even if the embodied knowledge is considered important, it is easily analysed only in relation to the objects in a museum, just as I learned by drawing myself in space, next to the ox wagon, where a focus was mainly on the relationships between the museum object and visitor.

4.1.3 Self Portrait

Self Portrait or self in the space, was a combination of photography, augmented reality collage and painting but concentrating mostly on the reflections on self. These images were not made during the visit to the museums but were more of a retrospect reflection on the visiting experience. This is how the process of placing self in the research setting is described:

Through placing myself in the research material, I had to face some unpleasant connotations and ponder on what is my role in the colonial setting, especially today as a researcher. I almost refused to make the collage in the first place, thinking that I will become too involved. Later I started to trust that the uncomfortable feeling was a sign that there are interesting factors which should be investigated. Combining the photo of myself with Anna Friederike, daughter of the Rhenish

missionary F.H Kleinschmidt (fig. 13) was on the borders of tacky, but I wanted to dive headfirst into the connotations.

First thing that was realized was that I tried to place a fixed identity on my photo and what it represents. I was indecisive whether I represent an ancestor of the missionaries, a white / western average person, an "objective researcher", a woman, a former Namibian resident or some other more abstract character. I realized to let go, and not fixate on anything.

The process also made me ponder on why I want to create this comparison? Do I identify myself with Anna Friederike or is it a random connection? What are the reasons that made me choose her picture from all of the others? Why did I leave my face and her body and dress? So much of the choices happen in the moment and cannot be explained, much of it is random but much is a conscious choice, a result of my life history and motif. Trying to comment on anything through this hybrid self-portrait, might not even lead to success...



Figure 13 Drawing of self and Martti Rautanen's ox wagon, 2018



Figure 14 Self-portrait collage postcard, 2018

Looking back, a reason for creating the portrait, as well as the collage about self, were attempts to place myself and this research in historical continuity. Seeing that local cultures were influenced and changed in an imperial manner by Finnish and noting how this research is also done from a Finnish perspective raises certain issues. I, the artist/researcher am related to this history, both through my family and as a representative of Finland. The relationship cannot, in a satisfiable way be thoroughly analysed, but it should be realized. The purpose of this thesis is not to investigate or understand the whole truth about the relationship between Namibia and Finland, but perhaps it should be once again remembered how placing a Finnish person in the Finnish – Namibian museum setting can show signs of xenophobic or xenophilic manners in the person. If I, as an artist/researcher identify myself with the image of a daughter of a white missionary, hence I also might engage with other meanings of what that role brings along and even create the binary notion of “us the missionaries” and “the others”.

By appropriating the European white female role and clothes in the self-portrait, I also “fix” my current identity into the colonial discourse. Even if my aim is to challenge these stereotypes, I still rely on their meanings and hence, I once again, fall in the pit of oversimplification and binary thinking.

In the second image (fig. 14), where my self-portrait is painted and wearing a pith helmet, placed in front of the Nakambale Museum, the identification with missionaries, albeit done with ironic motifs, is again apparent. What is different is that I do not depict myself in a photorealistic way, like retros of what is in the image. This is done to move away from the rigid form of identity. However, it also shows how it is easier to depict others in rigid forms and representations, but the self is seen more complex. Looking back on my decisions and styles to place myself in the research setting, I argue that it is unfair to give oneself a special, ambiguous role in the investigations, while relaying on fixed interpretations of what historical characters or events represent.

4.1.4 Documenting

What is meant by this is photographing and writing about meetings with people, social events such conversations with people. This section might not be the most typical example of arts-based research, but a decision was made to include it, as it explains the different sides of the learning-processes and how these encounters influenced the art making.

One example of an encounter and discussion around Finland's role for Namibia, history and museums was that with

Nambala. When asked about history and what role does the history have on it, he shared the following story:

"There once was a man who had a son. The man told his son many times how he fought with a wolf and always won. Once the son asked, why didn't the wolf ever win? To this the man replied: The wolf will win the day it learns to tell the story..."
(Nambala, 2018)

In additions to the above story, the following learning journal entry was made:

Bishop Nambala, shared his thoughts how the Namibian culture today has been influenced by the Finnish. The clothes, such as his bishop's shirt the houses etc. He said that Namibian people sometimes complain about how white people tell their history. He continued and stated how even when these people are asked to tell the history in their words, they tell it the same way!

We continued the discussion about memory institutions, such as libraries, archives and museums and the relevance they have. He said, when comparing books and museums as

knowledge transporting arenas, that books can argue with each other, but museums can't. He reminded me that once my thesis is done, it will become a book about museums, in a library.

He showed the same appreciation for Finland which I could sense with my discussions in Nakambale museums, with Rev. Alpo Enkono. They both said when they see the old images of Namibian people dressed in traditional clothes with a lot of skin showing, they are thankful for Finnish missionaries for introducing new fashion style.

Nambala continued his ideas about museums and said that they are needed to learn about development. He said that seeing photographs in museums (such as the ones of Namibian in traditional clothing) is more powerful than hearing about it. He ranked learning experiences in the following way: most powerful is the experience, then the image, then the words. He also said that touching is important for learning. According to him, the reason why museums have signs for no touching, is precisely because everyone wants to touch! He elaborated that by touching certain historical objects through them one can "be in touch" with, for example, Nakambale (Martti Rautanen). Later he said how it will not be the same for a Namibian to visit Nakambale Museum. The experience of entering Martti Rautanen's old

house, is only so important for Finnish people who want to learn about their ancestors and experience the different life style. For Namibians Nakambale Museum is like a normal everyday surrounding. He linked this experience to tourism. People want to experience and visit significant sights for themselves.

Next our discussion was directed towards the intangible side of history. We agreed that no emotions are presented in the museum, but through the objects we can imagine them. The emotions are embedded in the objects. Last he pointed out how only very few fortunate objects are selected to the museum, and these objects affect how we see the history mostly. We both agreed that the whole story cannot ever be told...



Figure 15 Rev. Alpo Enkono in Nakambale Museum, 2018

The discussion with Nambala turned out to be more important than perhaps was anticipated at first. Looking back, I realize that I had to change some of my own prejudice towards Finnish missionaries and listen to his point of view. Of course, we also shared some similar ideas, such as the different voices in history telling and power which white people have had in telling the story. We agreed that reason and truth have historical, social, and cultural contexts, and that museums affect meaning. It was important to meet with a Namibian historian who knows about Finland's missionary past, who has been to Finland and spent time pondering on the assemblage. Both Nambala and Enkono (fig.15), who visited the museums during this research and shared his views, realized that Finnish missionaries had in the past denied Namibians from practicing their traditional culture, such as drinking local beer and using certain instruments¹⁵, but the overall attitude was grateful. Nambala also reminded me that the Finnish taught many Namibian people literacy and he argued that people ought to be even more grateful, visit the museums and know this history.

¹⁵ Also, certain indigenous music was not accepted for expressing Christian faith. See:

Löytty, S, 2012, p. 61

4.1.5 **Augmented reality collages**

Creating a postcard (fig 14) was a form of augmented reality collage design. Augmented reality, in this context means extending the physical world with art. (Buhl, Ejsing-Duun, 2013, p. 5) Its main purpose was to adapt similar processes as in museum constructing, reflect on the use of power through selection, and censorship and create unexpected connections. Similarly, as with the self-portraits, these images were not made during the visit to the museums but were a retrospect reflection on the visiting experience. This was written:

When I combine images, that are not originally meant to be together, new connotations and possibilities open up. Choosing fragments from photographs, drawings and paintings was based on aesthetic characteristic. I was creating a new whole, new meanings. I thought about how minds work selectively, how one can never memorize or even see everything around them. How we remember life through filters and cut out majority of the experience. Later we combine memories in arbitrary ways and believe our own mind...



Figure 16 Abstraction collage, 2018

From the beginning of cutting and pasting of photographs, drawings and painting, I realized that it is a process of manipulating knowledge. The different images transformed into new ones and result was a new representation, a result of human selection that was something different from the original images. As the material was manipulated, I made a realization about a similarity to knowledge shaping in museum construction.

A choice was made to frame the collage as a postcard (fig 14), something to remember the museums by, which in a similar manner could send to friends or relatives. Moreover, the similarities between these processes could be listed as having comparable target audience (tourists), similar theme (culture and travel), similar deficiencies (as mentioned, only a very small sample of the whole story), similar functions (inviting for participation, to visit / to send), similar manner of combining past, present and experience. Both might also include a certain entertainment factor. The artistic approach for my collage undeniably differs from a conventional postcard because the contexts were different, I attempted to play around with metaphors for research purposes. Creating the postcard was also commenting on the fragmented nature of memory, seeing and re-seeing in different contexts. I learned that it is impossible to construct anything without

manipulating it at the same time and the small representation does not do justice to the whole lived experience.

4.1.6 **Abstraction**

Abstraction was mostly done for the purposes to face the unexpected and ponder on the non-linear and rhizomatic learning processes. The process created the following thoughts:

I had the urge to somehow visualize the abstract, rhizomatic and fragmented formation of how I see the research. I wanted to leave space for mistakes, accidents, unexpectedness and failure. Sometimes I made some corrections but mostly focused on the dialogue of analogue and digital media or repetition and singular. Combining these visualizations with the research data (fig. 16) was as close as I could come to expressing the mess in my head...

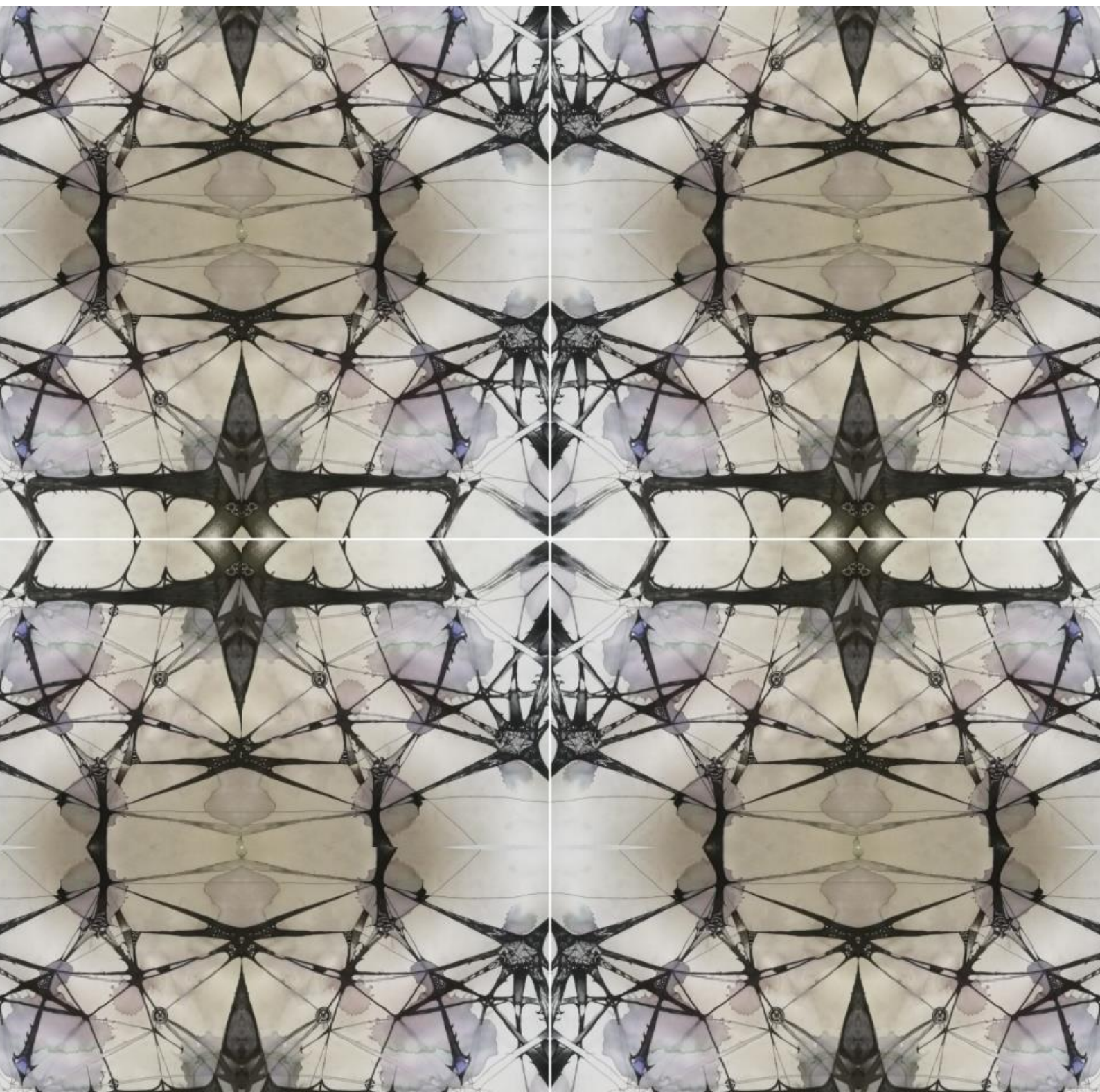


Figure 17 Abstraction, 2018

Abstraction was the last method that was experimented with, and it was done with the motif to reject “definite truth” or a perfect photorealistic representation. (fig. 17) I attempted to establish the connection with the intangibility of history and art. Moving away from realistic representations, inevitably also involved certain problematics. It is tempting to experiment with alternative depictions, but they might eventually be too involved with subjective vision and not make sense to anyone else. The questions that rises from this, is that what is too experimental? It can be argued that words do not function as codes either, and they are only understood because of a shared agreement and context. Could the abstract image achieve a different level of knowledge? If a post-colonial setting is visualised without stereotypical representations, perhaps this could challenge the colonial structures?

Coming back to non-representational approaches, perhaps the manifestation of an experience through “movement”, that is, a physical experience, encounter and process of creative abstraction, could build a better understanding of the research setting. If art is considered “more than just an object to be read” and “ultimately irreducible to signification and indeed to any discursive account given of it” (O'Sullivan, 2010, p.190)

then perhaps it can assist a researcher in harnessing different ways of knowing.

5. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this research is a summary of what has been discussed in this thesis and what outcomes derived from the theoretical and methodological revelations answering the questions:

- How might museums be constructed as knowledge-shaping arenas and what are Finnish - Namibian cultural history's relations to post-colonial theories?
- Is it and how is it possible to create knowledge and reflect on learning experience about Finnish - Namibian cultural history museums through artistic practices?

This thesis has explored and analysed subjective learning processes in relation to museums, certain Finnish - Namibian cultural historic events and post-colonial theories. These artistic learning processes were verbalized in order to propose new thoughts. The research was based on two case-study museums in Namibia about the history of Finnish missionary

work done in northern Namibia. The first part described, on a general level and with the case-study museums, how museums are constructed as knowledge-shaping arenas. Finland's relations to cultural imperialistic history and post-colonial theories was established. Second part of the investigation explored artist/researcher's knowledge creation in the museums and analysed the learning experience through arts-based methodology. The data collected and produced for this research, can be consider limited and ambiguous. It is as ambivalent as is the definition of "what is art". This is part of the chosen methodology and even the purpose of the research and it includes a risk.

The artistic learning processes were verbalized in learning journal entries, which were analysed for a more formal learning description. The formal learning discussion pondered on the meaning and significance of a physical visit to a museum, the embodied knowledge and non-representational or intangible side of the experience. More-over the artistic learning focused on museums as constructions and knowledge-shaping arenas and Finland's and the Finnish artist/researcher's relations to cultural imperialistic history and post-colonial theories. The data discussion functioned as a negotiation between the experience and the theory.

Attempting to answer the research questions, has led to the following findings.

5.1 NEGOTIATING THE POSSIBILITIES OF ARTS-BASED RESEARCH FOR LEARNING PROCESSES IN MUSEUMS

Artistic processes created a new layer of knowledge and meanings in the research. The processes were divided into photo elicitation, observational drawing, self-portrait, documenting, augmented reality collages and abstraction, which created some similar, and some different revelations about the case-study museums. Above all, these artistic practices acted as forms of encounter, meaning enhancement, multisensory and affectual engagement with surroundings and thinking “with” art. Many of these practices enabled building a deeper relationship with objects and spaces of significance. Through the arts-based research, learning experience became more complex and multisensory. Subjective position took a bigger focus which inevitably complicated the research. It can anyhow be argued, that it led to a more honest and holistic learning experience.

During the research process, it became apparent that the Finnish artefacts exhibited in the museums created most

enhancement and possibility for analysing though art. It should be remembered that also Namibian objects were showcased in the museums, but a focus was made on the Finnish side. This was mainly due to the Finnish perspective of this investigation. The Finnish objects which were chosen for artistic learning, tell specific story about Finnishness, which arguably does not represent the whole Finland, or Finnish missionaries for that matter. The Nakambale Museum also has arranged the Namibian and Finnish objects in opposite ends of the building and it might create binary interpretations. On the other hand, it might not be productive to search for too much hidden symbolism or agenda in the museums hierarchy. It was also realized how both, art and research processes risk a prejudice attitude and an attempt to read too much into the material.

One revelation in this research was made about a researcher's attitude and the misconception of being able to immortalize everything. What is researched, made art about and eventually included in the conclusion is a result of choices done for complex reasons. It was also realized that attempts to represent embodied experience or research findings might only resonate with the actual researcher. Related to this was the recognition of the so called "broken-telephone" effect, where the original historical event or object has gone through

so many processes that it has accumulated a completely new set of meanings. This happens when history is told and re-told, exhibited in museums as well as in art.

When engaging with photographing experience, it was noticed how most of the encounters happen in-between the acts of photographing, and what is been depicted is a small frozen moment. Through the act of photographing, as well as other creative processes a space can, anyhow, be seen and experienced in a specific way. This experience happens through movement and as open-ended, singular, rhizomatic and affectual process. Moving away from fixed knowledge was seen as a possibility to challenge stereotypes, which can be problematic regarding colonialist discourses.

Some of the artistic practices were considered more self-expressive than others, and the creative manners, as was argued, were learned from European art schools and traditions. This pointed out that the art I produced in this thesis, even when trying to resist, are products of a European view. My artistic taste in the drawings was different from photorealistic depictions and I found points of collapse and mistakes left intentionally as possibilities to move away from fixed knowledge towards more open-ended alternatives.

Meeting with Namibian people of relevance, such as Dr. Nambala and Rev. Enkono, was important for understanding different sides of the Finnish – Namibian history. Although these encounters might not be the most typical example of arts-based research, they non-the-less influenced the art making and learning. It was learned that traditionally northern Namibians have had a “round worldview” and missionaries introduced new traditions such as rectangular houses. The Nakambale Museum building is an example of this change, as the Finnish people didn’t adopt the Namibian style, but vice versa. Meeting with Nambala and Enkono changed some of my own critical thoughts about Finnish missionaries. Their attitude about the development work done by Finnish in Namibia was mostly grateful, even though both realized that Finnish missionaries had in the past denied Namibian from practicing some of their traditional culture.

Related to this was problematization of hindsight. Criticality about historical events can turn to arrogance, but anyhow self-criticality should not be abandoned. I, the artist/researcher am related to the continuity of Finnish - Namibian history, both through my family and as a representative of Finland. The relationship cannot, in a satisfiable way be thoroughly analysed, but it should be realized. Placing a Finnish person in the Finnish - Namibian

museum setting might emphasize xenophobic or xenophilic manners in the person. I, the artist/researcher identified myself with an image of a daughter of white missionary. One should be cautious whether as a result one adapts other meanings embedded in that role, such as the binary notion of “us the missionaries” and “the others”. However, commenting on this, it should not be forgotten that such roles are complex and should not be seen as rigid representations. Analysing the self-portrait elaborated the complexity of human representation. It was argued as unjust to forget the ambiguity of identity. If I, the artist/researcher “fix” my current identity into the colonial discourse, even aiming to challenge these stereotypes, a connection will still exist to the discourse. This will lead to problematic oversimplifications and binary thinking. It was also learned that post-colonialism is not the only one possible theory to reflect on the Finnish – Namibian history, and everything shouldn’t be perceived through it. However even the museum is a western construction and Finland’s imperial influence is noticeable in the history and present and shouldn’t be ignored.

Another thing that was learned through the artistic processes, was that a museum visitor’s mind tends to focus on the artefacts and prioritizes them above anything else. These objects and the artist/researcher relationship to them were

analysed. Photographs of them were manipulated through creative abstraction and collage, to reject perfect photorealistic representation. It was learned that they might be too involved with subjective vision and not benefit a larger context, but they functioned as comments on the fragmented nature of memory, seeing and re-seeing in different contexts. It was pointed out that art is more than just an object to be read and in fact deals with different ways of knowing. Moreover words do not function as codes either and language is understood because of a shared agreement and context and can also fail. Combining past, present and experience in a creative and even abstract way, could challenge colonial structures without stereotypical representations.

Finally, a revelation was made about the similarities of art and research and even knowledge shaping in museum construction. All of them are imperfect and incomplete processes, guided by subjective motifs and risk the possibility of misusing power on the spectator, who will in addition their own interpretations. This thesis has repeatedly argued that remaining neutral or objective is challenging, and it is impossible to construct anything without manipulating it at the same time. This research wants to point out that a representation does not do justice to the whole lived experience, from which the majority will never be shared.

Although this research has touched upon institutional critique, the purpose is not to dismiss the museum. Museums have potential as empowering spaces and creative, multisensory learning arenas. A proposal can be made to investigate these potentials for the Nakambale Museum and Onandjokwe Medical Museums and for a larger context. Regarding the negotiations in this thesis, the different social and cultural contexts and in-betweens should be realized and the power which knowledge-shaping has, recognized.

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INTERVIEWS

Bishop Dr. Shekutamba Vaino Vaino Nambala (2018, February) Personal interview

Rev. Alpo Enkono (2018, January) Personal interview